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The present paper illustrates how the Triangle Model of Responsibility (Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994) can be used as an integrative framework for understanding psychological ambiguities during peacekeeping operations. The model defines responsibility as the psychological adhesive that connects an individual to an event and to relevant prescriptions that should govern conduct. The model specifies that assessing responsibility requires information about the event, the relevant prescriptions or rules that govern the event, and the identity images or roles possessed by the individual that are relevant to the event. Responsibility is a direct function of the strength of the linkages between the event, prescriptions, and identity elements, and the importance of the elements to the individual. More specifically, high responsibility exists when a clear, well-defined set of prescriptions are applicable to the event (prescription-event link), the individual has personal control over the event (identity-event link), and the event, prescriptions, and/or identity images are important to the individual. Peacekeeping operations involve the potential for weakened linkages (the rules for a mission are unclear or conflicting, the soldier does not feel trained to do his or her job, the soldier has no feeling of personal control) and elements (the soldier believes what he or she is doing is not important), resulting in lower degrees of responsibility, commitment, and moral. A detailed discussion of the relevance of the model to peacekeeping operations is given, and recent research relevant to the utility of the model is presented.

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Running head: TRIANGLE MODEL

Using the Triangle Model of Responsibility to Understand

Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping Operations

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Abstract

The present paper illustrates how the Triangle Model of Responsibility (Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994) can be used as an integrative framework for understanding psychological ambiguities during peacekeeping operations. The model defines responsibility as the psychological adhesive that connects an individual to an event and to relevant prescriptions that should govern conduct. The model specifies that assessing responsibility requires information about the event, the relevant prescriptions or rules that govern the event, and the identity images or roles possessed by the individual that are relevant to the event. Responsibility is a direct function of the strength of the linkages between the event, prescriptions, and identity elements, and the importance of the elements to the individual. More specifically, high responsibility exists when a clear, well-defined set of prescriptions are applicable to the event (prescription-event link), the prescriptions are relevant to the individual by virtue of his or her identity (prescription-identity link), the individual has personal control over the event (identity-event link), and the event, prescriptions, and/or identity images are important to the individual. Peacekeeping operations involve the potential for weakened linkages (the rules for a mission are unclear or conflicting, the soldier does not feel trained to do his or her job, the soldier has no feeling of personal control) and elements (the soldier believes what he or she is doing is not important), resulting in lower degrees of responsibility, commitment, and morale. A detailed discussion of the relevance of the model to peacekeeping operations is given, and recent research relevant to the utility of the model is presented.

Using the Triangle Model of Responsibility to Understand

Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping Operations

Military personnel are experiencing a sudden increase in the number of peacekeeping

and humanitarian relief deployments. Both scientific analyses (see Miller & Moskos, 1995;

Segal & Segal, 1993) and editorials by senior officials (Clarke, 1995; Costello, 1995; Hunt,

1994; Roos, 1995) have noted the increased demands that peacekeeping operations place on

soldiers that have been trained to have a "combat" mentality. Often peacekeeping missions are

accompanied by psychological ambiguities surrounding the relevance of the mission to the

individual's role as a soldier, the guidelines for conduct during the mission, and the degree of

control individuals have over their job on the mission. These ambiguities can affect soldier

morale, responsibility, and commitment to the mission, as well as the amount of stress soldiers

experience during the deployment.

The Triangle Model of Responsibility (Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, &

Doherty, 1994) provides a framework for organizing these psychological ambiguities and

predicting their effects on soldier's responsibility and commitment to the mission.

Interestingly, a search of the reference data base for psychology journals (PSYCHLIT)

revealed only a couple of articles dealing with military peacekeeping, strongly suggesting the

need for psychological research and theory in the area of peacekeeping operations.

Importantly, a psychology of the peacekeeper must deal with how macro-sociological variables

created by society are construed by and influence the soldier (e.g. Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934;

Stryker & Statham, 1985). Although the model presented here is psychological in nature, it is

also interdisciplinary in that research and thinking from different areas are incorporated to understand fully the psychological experience of the peacekeeper.

The Triangle Model was developed to serve as a general model of responsibility. The main purpose of the present paper is to present the Triangle Model and discuss how the model is relevant to understanding the peacekeeper's various psychological dilemmas. The structure of the present paper includes a presentation of the Triangle Model and a discussion of how the psychological ambiguities in peacekeeping operations can be incorporated within the model, a presentation of data from recent studies relevant to the model, and a discussion of directions for future research.

The Triangle Model of Responsibility and Peacekeeping Operations

The concept of responsibility is crucial to analyses of social control and self-regulation. Responsibility is repeatedly mentioned and stressed in military doctrine, although there has been little attempt to understand the factors that cause soldiers to feel responsible for their performance and therefore to persevere toward attaining desired goals. When individuals are responsible for their actions they become engaged in what they are doing, as their performance has greater implications for their receipt of relevant rewards or punishments. When individuals are not responsible for their performance, feelings of indifference and disconnection arise, as what happens has little impact on their identity or the outcomes they receive. One major threat to superior performance during peacekeeping operations is reduced feelings of personal responsibility. For reasons discussed below, the nature of peacekeeping operations can predispose soldiers not to take responsibility for their performance, and therefore not to be engaged in what they are doing.

Schlenker et al. (1994) noted that prior analyses of responsibility often offered multiple meanings of the concept, vacillating between referring to responsibility as causality, a mental state of mind, an obligation arising as a function of an individual's role, and accountability or answerability (see Fincham & Jaspers, 1980, McKeon, 1957). Schlenker et al. (1994) offered the Triangle Model to serve as an integrative framework for understanding prior analyses of responsibility, including when people will hold others responsible for events as well as when individuals will themselves feel responsible for a given performance. I focus on the application of the model to understanding when individuals themselves feel responsible for a performance.

According to the model, responsibility is the psychological adhesive that connects an individual to an event and to relevant prescriptions or rules that should govern conduct. The model views responsibility on any given occasion as a transaction between the specific event that has occurred or is anticipated (e.g. exam, battle, mission, training exercise), the prescriptions or rules that govern the event ("shop" rules, general ethical codes such as "help others who are in need"), and the identity images the individual has that are relevant to the event and prescriptions (soldier, humanitarian, mother). The event, prescriptions, and identity images are the elements involved in any assessment of responsibility. The three elements and the linkages among them form a triangle when drawn schematically (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

The amount of responsibility an individual feels on any given occasion is a direct function of the strength of the linkages among the elements and the importance of the elements to the

individual. In brief, high responsibility exists when a clear, well-defined set of prescriptions or guidelines are applicable to the event (prescription-event link), the individual interprets the prescriptions as being relevant to his or her identity or role (prescription-identity link), the individual has personal control over the event (identity-event link), and the event, prescriptions, and/or identity images are important to the individual. What follows is a discussion of each of the elements, element importance, and the linkages among the elements. The relevance of each aspect of the model to peacekeeping operations will be discussed as each part of the model is presented.

<u>The Elements</u>

The event is the performance or unit of behavior that is anticipated or has occurred. Events can vary along a number of dimensions. For example, an event can either be an isolated occurrence such as an exam or a movement in battle, or can be more broad, such as a soldier's performance during a training course or mission, or consideration for promotion to a higher rank. For peacekeeping operations, examples of events include performance on courses designed to familiarize the soldier with local customs of the host nation(s), behavior during an escalation among conflicting parties, and performance on the entire peacekeeping mission.

Prescriptions refer to the rules or codes of conduct that are applicable to the event. They are guidelines for performance that tell the individual what is required for exemplary conduct. Prescriptions often serve as scripts that guide an individual's conduct on any given occasion (Abelson, 1981; Schlenker et al., 1994). Prescriptions are diverse, ranging from specific guidelines, such as company policy for ordering equipment, to more general ethical codes, such as "do unto others as they would do unto you."

Prescriptions applying to peacekeeping operations are diverse and ever-changing (Cornell-D'Echert, 1994; Meacham, 1992). Similar to all prescriptions, peacekeeping prescriptions range from the specific rules and guidelines for how soldiers are to conduct themselves during the mission to more general prescriptions or rules that guide the soldier's conduct. Examples of the former category include rules for how to act with members of the local population (e.g., "soldiers are to avoid developing friendships with the local population") and when to use force during the mission (e.g. "Use force only when personally attacked"). Examples of more general prescriptions include those that the soldier brings to the peacekeeping environment. For example, soldiers may believe it is important to help others less fortunate than they, that the United States should not be used to solve other people's problems (e.g., Halverson, Bliese, Moore, & Castro, 1995; Segal, Furukawa, & Lindh, 1990), and/or that individuals should be held responsible for their own situation.

Identity images are roles, qualities, characteristics, or aspirations an individual possesses. Examples of identity images include being a mother or father, a soldier, a humanitarian, a liberal or conservative, or an officer or non-commissioned. As such a list indicates, the identity images an individual possesses arise from a combination of both controllable and uncontrollable factors. For example, an individual presumably "chooses" to be an officer or of a certain political ideology. However, an individual may be a father, yet not have planned to have a child. Even though the individual did not choose to be a father, "father" is still an identity image of the individual, and obligates the individual to behave in certain kinds of ways.

Numerous identity images are relevant to peacekeeping operations. In addition to the traditional military identity images of officer, non-commissioned officer, infantryman, combat

soldier, etc., a new set of identity images become relevant, including peacekeeper, peacemaker, humanitarian, mediator, observer, and multi-national "interactant" (Eyre, Segal, & Segal, 1993; Miller & Moskos, 1995; Segal et al., 1990; Segal & Segal, 1993). In addition, in most cases these identity images are more or less forced on the soldier. For example, soldiers who enter the Army may not think they will be involved in situations in which they are not defending national interests through the use of force. Although peacekeeping operations are not new (see Gravino, Segal, Segal, & Waldman, 1993), soldiers and society are still at the initial phase of constructing what it means to be a peacekeeper. In an excellent analysis of the social construction of peacekeeping, Eyre et al. (1993) noted that although most people agree that the main purpose of the military is to serve national interests, the use of the military to encourage or enforce peace has not yet been institutionalized as a component of the armed forces. Therefore, the process by which soldiers incorporate the role of peacekeeper into their identity is of immense importance (see Miller & Moskos, 1995, Segal et al., 1990).

<u>Element Importance or Potency</u>

The prescriptions, event, and/or identity images can all differ in their importance to the individual, or for that matter to society as a whole. Some events are more important than others either because they mean more to the individual or produce greater consequences. For example, a battle can be more or less important depending on its implication for the overall campaign or the number of casualties incurred. Prescriptions are more important when they refer to more serious rules (e.g. murder versus shoplifting). Identity images are more important when they refer to more central components of the individual's identity (Schlenker, Britt, & Pennington, in press).

For example, being a parent may be more important to someone than being at the top of his or her professional field.

It is clear that individuals differ in their view of the importance of peacekeeping operations (Gifford, 1993; Halverson, Bliese, Moore, & Castro, 1995). These individual differences are undoubtedly a function of the importance individuals place on the prescriptions and identity images associated with being a peacekeeper. Some individuals believe it is important to promote world peace, whereas other individuals believe it is a waste of time and resources to help other countries solve each other's problems (Segal et al., 1990). In addition to soldiers' own views of the importance of peacekeeping operations, they must also contend with their perceptions of how society views such missions. For example, German peacekeepers may experience stress as a function of the ambivalent feelings German society has for such operations (Kornhuber, 1994). As Eyre et al. (1993) noted, societies are still in the process of "constructing" the importance of peacekeeping operations relative to other types of operations.

Schlenker et al. (1994) argued that the combined importance of the elements represents the potency of the performance . As the potency surrounding a given event increases, so do the consequences of performance for the individual. When an individual believes in what he or she is doing, the self-system becomes engaged, and the individual will feel more responsible for and committed to what he or she is doing (Britt, 1995b). However, the potency of the elements is only one of two crucial factors in determining how responsible and committed an individual should be during a performance. The second factor is the linkages among the various elements.

The Linkages

Figure 1 indicates that the linkages among the elements form a triangle when drawn schematically. The linkages among the elements are crucial ingredients in determining how responsible and committed an individual is for any given performance. When these linkages are strong, the individual perseveres in the face of obstacles to attain desired goals. When the linkages are weak, apathy and uncertainty plague performance.

Prescription-event link. The prescription-event link refers to the extent that a clear set of prescriptions, rules, or guidelines apply to a given event. This link is strong when a single set of rules or guidelines unambiguously apply to an event. Examples of a strong link include a student being told exactly what is required to achieve a superior grade in a course or a supervisor clearly laying out the steps to complete an inventory for a company. The link is weak when the rules for a particular performance are unclear or ambiguous, or when more than one set of rules appears relevant to a particular event. For example, an employee may be told to give a report on the current status of a product, yet be given no guidelines about what the report should include. One might argue that the plight of Oliver North entailed the conflicting prescriptions of "free American hostages at all costs" and "do not violate established government policy." The prescription-event link represents that part of responsibility stressed by legal scholars on the clarity of various rules and regulations (Hart, 1968).

Prior research has shown that a strong prescription-event link provides direction to behavior and reduces anxiety (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). When an individual "knows what to do" going into an event his or her behavior is easily channeled to attaining desired goals. However, when the rules or guidelines are unclear, performance suffers, especially when

individuals are expected to do well (Baumeister, Hamilton, & Tice, 1985). Many problems within

organizations occur when rules or regulations are too complex, nonexistent, or are not clearly

communicated to workers (Richardsen & Burke, 1995).

Peacekeeping operations are often characterized by a weakened prescription-event link.

One of the main stressors facing soldiers on peacekeeping missions is uncertainty about the

mission and what is required of the soldier (Bartone & Adler, 1994; Gifford, 1993). For example,

Miller and Moskos (1995), in describing the experiences of soldiers from Operation Support

Hope in Somalia, noted that "Interpreting the rules of engagement was a most contentious issue

for soldiers subject to acts of hostility (p. 9)." Another source of a weakened prescription-event

link on peacekeeping operations involves the conflict between the guidelines that soldiers have

internalized prior to the mission and guidelines mandated during the peacekeeping operations.

For example, Segal et al., (1990) found that 50% of the soldiers they surveyed believed that they

could not be effective in a peacekeeping role without using force. Of course this attitude is the

result of repeated emphasis on aspects of combat training such as weapons qualification, self-

defense, and nuclear-biological-chemical defense training. However, soldiers are likely to be told

upon arriving to a peacekeeping mission that they are not to use force except under extremely

restrictive conditions. If soldiers believe that such restrictions reduce the likelihood of mission

success, uncertainty arises and the soldier feels less responsible and committed to the mission.

The rules associated with performance on peacekeeping missions may also suddenly

change depending on certain contingencies. For example, an uprising from one of the parties

involved in a conflict may necessitate the radical restructuring of guidelines for how to act from

"peacekeeping" to "peacemaking" (Meacham, 1992). Soldiers will then be required to go from a

peacekeeping mode to a "semi-combat" mode, once again encountering a set of rules that may be confusing or conflict with other guidelines.

Of course, it would be a mistake both to view all peacekeeping missions as identical and to assume that the prescription-event link is inevitably weak during peacekeeping operations. Training programs have recently been devised to reduce some of the uncertainty surrounding peacekeeping operations, and soldiers who participate in such programs do feel more certain about guidelines surrounding the mission (Segal et al., 1990). However, training programs cannot be expected to anticipate all of the changes that may occur during a given mission. Ultimately it is up to unit leaders to communicate changes and define the mission in ways that clarify the mission to the soldier (Bartone & Adler, 1994).

Prescription-identity link. The prescription-identity link refers to the degree to which a set of rules or standards apply to an individual as a result of the individual's characteristics (e.g., being an adult or a citizen of a given country), roles (e.g., being a parent, officer, commander), convictions or aspirations (e.g., being a Muslim, a scientist, a humanitarian), or training (e.g., being a registered nurse or lawyer). In essence, the link refers to the strength of the connection between a set of rules and aspects of an individual's identity. In the responsibility literature this link is often referred to as "role responsibility" (Hamilton, 1978).

A strong prescription-identity link exists when a set of prescriptions clearly apply to an individual. For example, being a commander of a unit clearly implies that the individual must be attentive to the behavior of his or her subordinates. Another example of a strong link is that a devote Muslim must follow the rules of the Koran. A weak prescription-identity link exists when a set of prescriptions do not apply to an individual or when there is ambiguity or conflict about

whether a set of rules apply to an individual. For example, the mental illness defense argues that certain rules are not applicable to an individual because he or she did not possess the characteristics of being of "sound mind." In the Watergate scandal, Nixon argued that certain prescriptions did not apply to him because he was the president of the United States. A weak prescription-identity link also exists when an individual is experiencing an identity or role conflict. For example, an individual may not be able to decide which career to enter, and therefore fails to "connect" to a set of guidelines governing his or her job performance. In addition, individuals may experience conflicting prescriptions within a single job, as in the case of a professor feeling conflict between spending time conducting research and teaching high quality courses to students. Conflicting prescriptions can apply to an individual within a single performance domain (intra-role conflict) or between performance domains (inter-role conflict; see Stryker & Statham, 1985).

A strong prescription-identity link provides guidance and purpose for an individual. The individual does what he or she was trained to do, and feels bound by the obligations his or her job entails. Individuals experience reduced anxiety and uncertainty when they have a "road map" that is relevant to their convictions and aspirations. A weak identity-prescription link results in feelings of disconnection from one's job and reduced feelings of commitment. Alienation, which occurs when individuals fail to incorporate any of societies prescriptions (Seeman, 1959), may represent one of the weakest forms of the prescription-identity link.

The prescription-identity link can be weakened a couple of different ways during peacekeeping operations. Perhaps the most basic level is when soldiers are required to do something they are not trained to do (Britt, Moore, Adler, & Bartone, 1995; Halverson et al., 1995). Although it may seem apparent that soldiers will not feel responsibile when they are

assigned a task that they have not been trained to perform, many soldiers receive no specialized training for peacekeeping operations. Even though the US armed forces has developed peacekeeping training programs (see Segal et al., 1990), often soldiers depart to a peacekeeping operation without any prior specialized training for how to handle the special contingencies that develop during such operations. Past research has shown that approximately 50% of soldiers report that additional training is needed to succeed on peacekeeping operations (Bartone, Adler, & Vaitkus, in press; Segal et al., 1990), buttressing the argument that such training is in fact needed. In the absence of peacekeeping training, research has showed that some soldiers come to adopt the role of peacekeeper or humanitarian to adjust to the mission, whereas others fall back on a "combat mode" in order to adapt to peacekeeping missions (Miller & Moskos, 1995).

Another way the prescription-identity link can be weakened is when soldiers experience identity or role conflict between the different prescriptions that are relevant to peacekeeping operations. For example, soldiers may experience conflict between the desire to follow orders not to help members of the local population and their own convictions that it is important to help others who are less fortunate than they. Furthermore, the prescriptions associated with the identity images of "peacekeeper" and "warrior" are themselves conflicting, and soldiers are often expected to adopt both types of identities during a single operation. Finally, if soldiers do not believe that peacekeeping operations are relevant to their career and future aspirations, they will feel less responsible for and committed to what they are doing.

As mentioned earlier, the Army has developed training programs to familiarize soldiers with contingencies that develop during peacekeeping operations (although not all soldiers are exposed to the training programs). In addition, some initial evidence has shown that such training

can affect soldier attitudes toward peacekeeping operations. For example, Segal et al. (1990) found that soldiers who participated in peacekeeping training increased their belief that "a soldier is professional and does any job he (sic) is given with equal professional skill (p. 391)." However, it may be premature to suggest that such a finding translates into "an acceptance of the peacekeeping role (p. 391)." To fully strengthen the prescription-identity link soldiers need to be given proper training for peacekeeping operations and be convinced that peacekeeping operations are in fact relevant to the mission of the armed forces and to the soldier's future career development.

Identity-event link. The identity-event link refers to the extent to which an individual feels connected to an event, such as by having personal control over the event. Heider's (1958) analysis of responsibility dealt primarily with this link, as he noted that the degree of connection could range from simply being associated with an event (e.g. being present at an event) to having full control over an event and being able to foresee the consequences (e.g. an individual commits a pre-planned murder fully cognizant of the penalties). The identity-event link is the most extensively, and earliest (see Aristotle, 1952) studied link in the responsibility literature (see Fincham & Jaspers, 1980, Schlenker et al., 1994).

A strong identity-event link exists when the individual has personal control over his or her performance and behaves not out of a desire for external rewards, but out of an intrinsic desire accomplish a given goal (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Rotter, 1966; Spector, 1982). A strong link is also characterized by the belief that the individual can carry out the actions that are required to make a meaningful contribution to the task at hand (Bandura, 1977). The identity-event link is weak when individuals do not feel personal control over an event, either because they do not believe

that they have the ability to carry out the required actions or that they are performing the event because of external pressures rather than because of their own desire (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Of course, when an individual feels that he or she is simply being told what to do by someone else, the "someone else" can be held responsible, therefore making the individual feel less responsible.

A large amount of research suggests that a strong identity-event link is associated with better task performance, more effective problem solving, greater task persistence, more positive emotions, and even better psychological and physical health. In sharp contrast, a weak identity-event link is associated with poor performance, reduced levels of motivation, and poor psychological and physical health (Bandura, 1977; Deci & Ryan, 1987; Langer, 1982; Seligman, 1975).

The lack of control soldiers feel during peacekeeping operations may represent one of the most potent threats to feelings of responsibility and commitment. One of the hardest things for soldiers during certain types of peacekeeping operations is to have to stand by and witness horrific acts committed against members of a local population (Bartone & Adler, 1995; Halverson et al., 1995; Weisaeth, 1990). Soldiers must also put up with being taunted and humiliated without being able to respond (Weisaeth, 1990). Rules of engagement that are overly restrictive can serve to make the soldier feel "out of control," thereby decreasing the soldier's belief in his or her efficacy to perform even the most basic behaviors (Seligman, 1975). When soldiers do not feel they have control over their actions, they will not feel responsible for or committed to what they are doing.

How does one create a sense of control under such stringent circumstances? A couple of different possibilities exist. One possibility is to make sure soldiers are given some tasks where they can exert some form of control (e.g. Stokes, 1995). Preferably these tasks involve the

utilization of the soldier's primary job skills (e.g., a strong prescription-identity link), and represent activities that the individual feels he or she has mastery over and can perform when given the opportunity. For example, if the soldier is an infantryman, have him practice small unit maneuvers with other soldiers. Another possibility might be to encourage some form of cognitive restructuring where the soldier is encouraged to find some form of control (e.g. predictive control) in situations that appear devoid of control (Weisaeth, 1990). For example, even if soldiers must not respond when being taunted, they may be encouraged to think that they are in fact choosing not to act because of the confusion that would ensue if they tried to punish the taunter.

Summary

Responsibility and commitment on any given occasion can best be viewed as a transaction between the person (identity images), a set of rules or guidelines that govern performance (prescriptions), and the performance itself (event). When the linkages among these elements are strong, and the elements are important, responsibility and commitment will be high. Responsibility and commitment are strongest when a clear set of guidelines apply to the event (prescription-event link), the rules apply to the individual as a function of proper training (prescription-identity link), the individual has personal control over his or her performance on the event (identity-event link), and the event is viewed as important by the individual. As the number of strong links decrease, and as the elements are viewed as less important, responsibility and commitment also decrease. Peacekeeping operations run the risk of soldiers feeling confused or conflicted about the guidelines for how to behave, not being trained for the mission to which they have been assigned, and feeling that they do not have the capacity to exert control over their

situation on deployment. Attempts to strengthen each of the linkages and the importance of the elements should result in increased feelings of responsibility and commitment during such operations.

Research Relevant to the Utility of the Triangle Model

Prior research in support of the Triangle Model involved examining whether an outside observer would attribute greater responsibility and commitment to an actor depending on the strength of the three links. Schlenker et al. (1994) found that across four different types of performance scenarios, the amount of responsibility assigned to an actor was a direct function of the strength of the three links among the event, identity images, and prescriptions. Schlenker et al. (1994) also found that individuals sought information relevant to the three links when faced with the task of determining how responsible an individual was for a given event.

During the past year we have been conducting research on whether the Triangle Model predicts an individual's own feeling of responsibility and commitment for a particular event. The model of responsibility I have presented in the present paper should actually apply to all forms of military operations. The appeal the model has for peacekeeping operations in particular is that it helps organize the problems that can develop during this unique class of operations. We have tested the Triangle model on samples of soldiers who were preparing for deployment and subsequently deployed to Saudi Arabia on a contingency operation (Operation Constant Vigilance), who deployed to Kuwait to deter Iraqi aggression (Operation Vigilant Warrior), and who deployed to Haiti to preserve peace during a political transition (Operation Uphold Democracy).

Our strategy for testing the model has been to examine whether the three links independently predict feelings of responsibility, morale, and commitment and whether element importance predicts responsibility, morale and commitment. Within an experimental setting it is possible to manipulate the links so that they are uncorrelated with one another (Schlenker et al., 1994). However, when the links are measured for individuals, there tends to be a moderate degree of correlation among the links (Britt, 1995b). Therefore, it is important to use statistical techniques that test for the unique contributions of each of the links in predicting responsibility and commitment. We have also tested a prediction from the model that increased feelings of responsibility and commitment serve to magnify the impact job performance has on individuals' psychological and physical health. We predicted that degree of job stress and belief in mission success should have a greater impact on the psychological and physical health of the individual when the individual feels responsible for and committed to his or her job performance. In all of the studies to be presented, the survey items testing the Triangle Model were only a subset of the items soldiers completed.

Operation Constant Vigilance

Operation Constant Vigilance involved a Patriot Air Defense Artillery task force of approximately 1000 soldiers that was deployed on a regular 6-month rotation to Saudia Arabia. The unit's mission was to be prepared to fire patriot missiles in the event of Iraqi aggression. The US Army Medical Research Unit-Europe (USAMRU-E) administered a pre-deployment survey to a subset of members from the task force and then deployed to Saudi Arabia to administer a mid-deployment survey in addition to other activities.

Pre-deployment phase. For the pre-deployment phase, we surveyed approximately 300

soldiers. Items were generated to tap each of three links of the Triangle model and also assess

perceived responsibility and commitment (Britt et al., 1995). Soldiers were instructed,

"Thinking about your upcoming deployment, please rate your agreement with the following":

Identity-Prescription Link: "The mission is relevant to my role as a soldier"; Prescription-

Event Link: "I feel informed about what should happen on the mission"; Identity-Event Link:

"I will have control over my job on the mission"; Responsibility: "I feel responsible for my

performance during the mission"; Commitment: "I am committed to the mission." Ratings of

responsibility and commitment were highly correlated, and were therefore combined into a

single measure. Soldiers also completed questions regarding job stress, a General Symptom

Inventory (Bartone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham, 1989) and the Positive Well-Being subscale

of Bradburn's General Well-Being scale (Bradburn, 1969).

Britt et al. (1995) found, using standard multiple regression, that each of the three links

independently predicted ratings of responsibility and commitment. The multiple correlation

between the three links and responsibility/commitment was .65. As seen in Figure 2, as the

number of strong links increased, so did responsibility and commitment.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Responsibility and commitment were strongest for soldiers who felt informed about the

mission, were doing what they were trained to do, and felt they had control over their job.

Responsibility and commitment were weakest when soldiers were unclear as to what was

expected of them, were doing things irrelevant to their training, and did not feel in control of their job performance.

The results also revealed that feelings of responsibility and commitment interacted with stress on the job to predict psychosomatic symptomology and positive well-being. The findings for psychosomatic symptoms are presented in Figure 3 to illustrate the pattern found for both measures.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The results indicated that the relationship between job stress and symptomology was magnified under conditions of high responsibility and commitment. When soldiers felt responsible for their upcoming performance, the degree of stress in their job was a much stronger predictor of psychological and physical health symptoms than when they felt less responsible, supporting the hypothesis that responsibility and commitment serve to engage the individual in his or her performance.

Mid-deployment phase. Approximately 600 soldiers were surveyed during the actual deployment. Soldiers answered questions assessing each of the three links, responsibility, commitment, the extent to which they felt disconnected from their job, and their belief they would do a good job on the mission (Britt, 1995b). For the mid-deployment phase we assessed each of the linkages with both a positively worded and negatively worded question. For example, the Prescription-Identity link was assessed with the questions "I am doing what I was trained to do (+)" and "My job is not relevant to what I was trained to do (-)." The responsibility and

commitment items were again highly correlated, and therefore combined into a single measure. Soldiers also completed a 7-item version of Radloff's Depression Scale (1977), which assesses how many days a week an individual experiences depressive symptoms.

Britt (1995b) found that the results for the mid-deployment phase replicated those for the pre-deployment phase. Standard multiple regression again indicated that each of the links independently predicted ratings of responsibility and commitment. The multiple correlation between the three links and responsibility/commitment was .41. The results also indicated that each of the three links independently predicted feelings of job disconnection. The multiple correlation between the three links and job disconnection was .53. As the number of strong links decreased, so did feelings of responsibility and commitment and job connection. Again, responsibility, commitment, and personal connection with one's job were greatest when soldiers knew what to expect, felt personal control over their job, and felt trained for what they were doing.

Britt (1995b) also found that belief in mission success interacted with responsibility/commitment to predict depression. This interaction conceptually replicated the findings from the pre-deployment phase. As seen in Figure 4, how soldiers believed they would do on the mission had a much greater impact on their depression level when they felt responsible for and committed to their job performance.

Insert Figure 4 about here

When soldiers did not feel responsible or committed, their beliefs in their ability to perform the mission had less of an impact on their level of depression. This finding again indicates that feelings of responsibility and commitment serve to engage the self such that the outcome of the performance anticipated by the individual has a greater impact on his or her psychological health (Britt, 1995b).

Operations Vigilant Warrior and Uphold Democracy

The study of human dimensions in Operation Vigilant Warrior involved the joint collaboration of USAMRU-E and the Department of Military Psychiatry, both from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR). The study of human dimensions in Operation Uphold Democracy was conducted by the Department of Military Psychiatry. A summary and analysis of the data collected in Operation Restore Democracy can be found in Halverson et al., 1995. An analysis of the survey items used in both operations revealed that items existed to tap each of the three links in the model, as well as element importance. In addition, the items chosen to test the Triangle Model represented only a subset of the total number of items in the survey. Roughly the same survey was administered to soldiers in both operations, with identical items used to test the Triangle Model being present in both samples. Operation Vigilant Warrior involved both armor and infantry soldiers who were deployed to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as a direct result of an Iraqi military build-up on the Kuwait border. Their mission was to be prepared to attack in the event of Iraqi aggression. Operation Uphold Democracy involved U.S. forces deployed as part of a multi-national force to initially force General Raul Cedras out of power, but eventually turned into a peacekeeping operation in which the U.S. forces oversaw the transition of power from the General to President Aristide (Halverson et al., 1995).

Britt (1995c) examined whether the Triangle Model predicted morale during these two operations. Although the Triangle Model was developed to understand responsibility, the three links and importance of the elements were also expected to predict morale. Manning (1991), in his analysis of morale, discusses virtually all of the factors described by the Triangle Model as predictors of morale. Thus, items were selected to tap each of the three links, the importance of the mission to the soldier, and the soldier's morale. Items assessing the three links asked soldiers to rate their degree of agreement with the following statements: Prescription-Identity Link: "What I'm doing in the deployment area is what I've been trained to do"; Prescription-Event Link: "I am briefed regularly by my leaders on the mission and what we have achieved" Identity-Event Link: "I am making a real contribution to accomplishing this mission." Soldiers also completed items assessing the soldier's perceived importance of the mission (e.g. "I feel that what I am doing during this deployment is important") and morale (e.g. "My personal morale is good right now").

Britt (1995c) found that the three links of the Triangle Model and the perceived importance of the mission independently predicted soldier morale in both Operation Restore Democracy and Operation Vigilant Warrior. The multiple correlation of the three links and importance with morale was .71 for Operation Vigilant Warrior and .62 for Operation Restore Democracy. These results indicate that the Triangle Model is capable of providing fairly strong prediction of morale on both contingency and peacekeeping operations.

Further Directions for Research and Training

Our research program thus far has focused on testing whether the strengths of the links in the Triangle model and the importance of the elements predict responsibility, commitment, and morale. Furthermore, we have examined how feelings of responsibility and commitment engage

the self, leading to a greater impact of work-related experiences on psychological and physical health. One important step for future research is to examine whether the Triangle Model of Responsibility predicts actual performance during peacekeeping and other types of military operations. We would predict that the strengths of each of three links and element importance should affect actual performance during peacekeeping operations.

Future research should also examine the impact that a soldier's work has on his her identity. When the event, identity images, or prescriptions are viewed as important by the individual, and the prescriptions are connected to the individual's identity, then the individual's job should possess greater meaning. The connecting of self to organizational prescriptions and rules may be one of the major determinants of whether soldiers re-enlist or chose to make the armed forces a career.

Another interesting question is whether a strong belief in mission importance and relevance can override weak links among the elements in order to instill feelings of responsibility and commitment. In a recent pilot study of medical personnel returning from a humanitarian assistance mission in the Ukraine, Britt (1995d) found that responsibility and commitment were relatively high even though participants felt only a moderate degree of personal control and mission clarity. However, the results also revealed a very high level of perceived importance of the mission and relevance of the mission to the soldier's identity, which may have accounted for the increased feelings of responsibility in the face of weak identity-event and prescription-event links. Further research should be directed toward understanding how and why soldiers feel responsible and committed during operations that are ambiguous or unclear.

Schlenker et al. (1994) noted that an audience component can be included within the Triangle Model so that different audiences might have different perceptions of the strengths of the three links and the importance of the elements (the model then becomes a pyramid, with the audience as the "eye in the sky," looking down on the elements and the links among them; Schlenker et al., 1994). It may be that one major source of stress for soldiers is when there is a discrepancy between how they view the links among the elements and how they think their unit leaders view the links. For example, one of the most frustrating experiences for soldiers on a peacekeeping operation may be to believe that the rules are unclear, they have not had the proper training to do the job, and they have no feeling of control, yet think their unit leaders believe the soldiers clearly understand the mission, are properly trained, and have control over their job. Such a state of imbalance may be an important determinant of vertical cohesion (Vaitkus & Griffith, 1990).

At a practical level, it will be important to test whether interventions designed to strengthen the links in the model actually lead to stronger links, and then to greater levels of personal responsibility and determination. If effective intervention strategies can be developed, many of the psychological ambiguities soldiers experience on operations such as peacekeeping missions may be reduced or eliminated, and be replaced by feelings of pride and personal accomplishment for mission performance.

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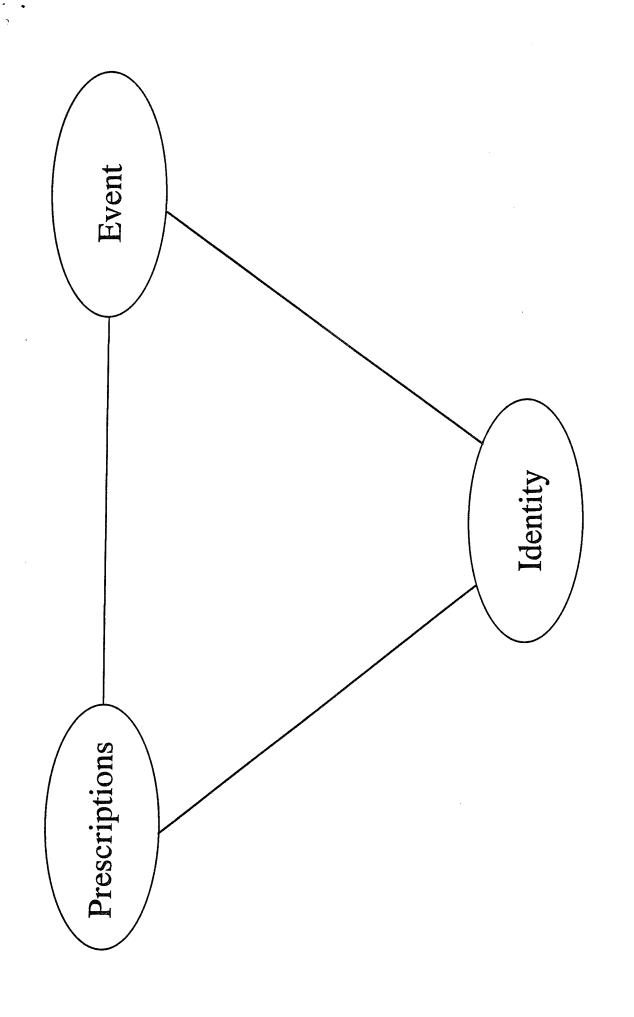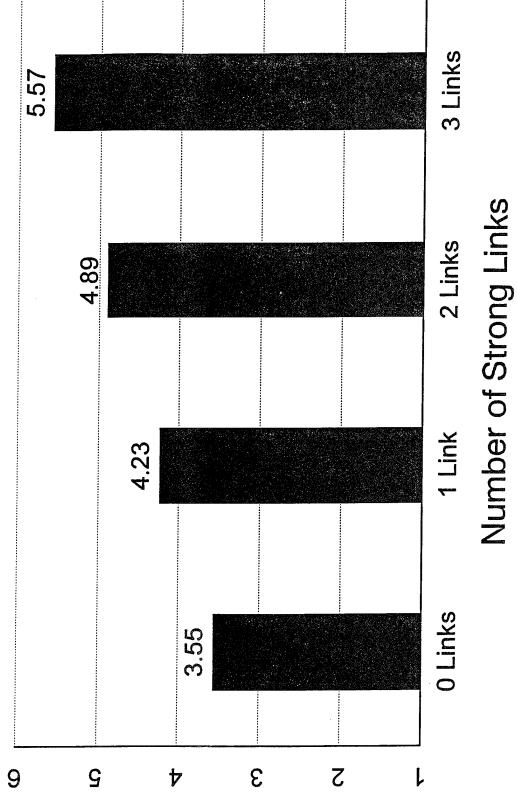
Author's Note

Figure Captions

1. A schematic of the responsibility triangle.

2. Responsibility/Commitment as a function of the number of strong links: Patriot pre-deployment study.

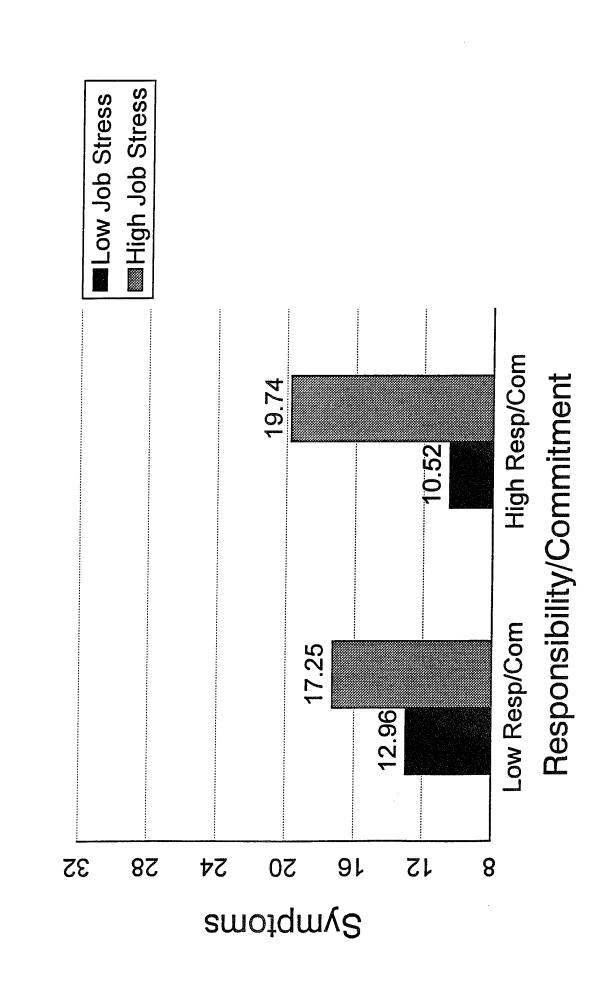3. Psychosomatic symptoms as a function of responsibility/commitment and stress on the job: Patriot pre-deployment study.

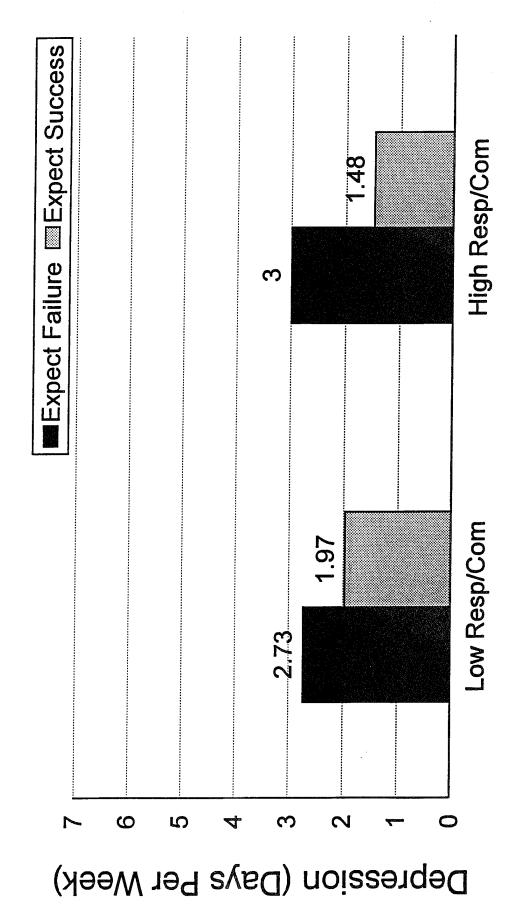4. Depression as a function of responsibility/commitment and belief in mission success: Patriot mid-deployment study.

The Responsibility Triangle